



State of Louisiana  
Office of the Governor  
**GOVERNOR BOBBY JINDAL**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Governor Jindal Requests Presidential Disaster Declaration, Tells Residents to Stay Informed as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Considers Opening Morganza Spillway**

**BATON ROUGE** - Today, Governor Jindal held a UCG meeting of state agency leaders along with federal officials from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the National Weather Service to stress the important actions state agencies are taking in preparation for potential Miss. River flooding and the Corps' possible opening of the Morganza Spillway.

Governor Jindal said, "The Corps has now officially requested permission from the Miss. River Commission to open the Bonne Carre Spillway, and they expect to open it Monday. The Corps also briefed us today on their triggers for opening the Morganza Spillway. They said they have not yet requested permission to open the Morganza Spillway from the Miss. River Commission, but they are evaluating rising river waters and considering it as a part of their flood fight. In order to open Morganza, Col. Felmming with the Corps will make a recommendation to Army Corps General Walsh and the General will then make the final decision on whether or not to open the spillway.

"We saw the Spillway structure yesterday first-hand. It has 125 gates that would be opened one at a time as they monitor the flow of water and then adjusted, as needed based on safe water flow. If opened, DOTD will close the portion of LA 1 that crosses the Morganza Spillway and perform an inspection of the structure prior to allowing traffic to flow again. Of course, our number one concern will be the safety of residents in the surrounding area, and that is why we met today on what areas may be effected by the opening of Morganza, which has not been opened since 1973 and has never been opened before because of a flooding trigger."

On requesting a disaster declaration for the state, the Governor said, "We are also announcing today that we have sent a letter to the President to request him to declare an emergency effective April 25, 2011 as a result of the predicted and imminent record flooding along the Mississippi River. A Presidential Disaster Declaration, under the Stafford Act, will begin the process for the state to request Individual Assistance and Public Assistance funds to help those who will be

impacted by flooding, in addition to helping communities clear debris and other effects from high water.”

## **LA NATIONAL GUARD ACTIVATION**

Governor Jindal activated the Louisiana National Guard to respond to this incident yesterday. The first deployment from LANG will be approximately 150 guardsmen to support state and parish efforts and prepare for possible flooding. Their missions will include:

- Aviation support for levee overflights;
- Supporting "at risk" parishes with possible support including:
  - Supporting parish levee inspections with personnel and vehicles
  - Supporting parish efforts in moving supplies
  - Supporting efforts to fortify levees

The Governor said LANG deployed LNO teams to East Carroll, Madison, Tensas, and Concordia Parishes. LNO teams will embed in the Parish Emergency Operations Center to maintain close coordination with Parish Officials for support requests. As LANG anticipates that additional parishes are threatened, LANG will deploy additional teams.

LANG also activated National Guard personnel to provide a flood response force with the approximately 150 personnel on State Active Duty. The 528th Engineer Battalion out of Monroe will serve as the command element for this task force to organize and deploy flood response teams to the affected Parishes and the 5th Levee District. Teams of 18-personnel will be equipped with Hummers, High Water Vehicles, and M-Gators in order to support parish efforts to monitor levees, deliver equipment and supplies, and fortify/reinforce levees.

To support the 5th Levee District, tomorrow LANG is delivering three Palletized Load System Racks. The Levee District will mount these racks on their Swamp Buggies to help deliver sandbags to sand boils. LANG will deliver this to the Levee District's point of contact in Waterproof who will escort the trucks to the delivery sites.

## **MISS. RIVER LEVEL UPDATE**

*Current projections show the crests on the MS River are as follows:*

Vidalia (flood stage is 48 feet): projection is around 64 feet on the morning of 5/22. Right now it is at 52 feet – has come up a foot in the last 24 hours, and will continue to go up about a foot a day.

Tallulah (flood stage is 43 feet): projection is around 57.5 feet on the morning of 5/20. Rose more than a foot in the last 24 hours and is projected to rise a foot a day for the next six days.

Red River Landing (flood stage is 68 feet): projection is around 65.5 feet on morning of 5/23. This is more than four feet above the highest level on record.

Baton Rouge (flood stage is 35 feet): projection is 47.5 feet on afternoon of 5/23. We are at flood stage right now in Baton Rouge – the levees here protect the city until 48 feet. The expected crest in Baton Rouge is around the level of the record flood of 1927 (48 feet).

Donaldsonville (flood state is 27 feet): projection is 36 feet on evening of 5/23. This is within about two feet of the top of the levee and ties the record level (1927).

Reserve (flood stage is 22 feet): projection is 25 feet on morning of 5/24. Within one foot of major flood stage and within one foot of the record level (1929 – 26 feet).

## **CONCORDIA PARISH**

Governor Jindal said that he will visit Concordia Parish this afternoon to see the flood fighting operations there. DOTD purchased 18,000 linear feet of Hesco baskets in an effort to protect the Vidalia riverfront area. HESCO baskets are wire mesh containers with fabric liners that serve as semi-permanent barriers for flood protection. These are being transported to Vidalia today for the levee district and US Army Corps of Engineers to place in a triple layer around the Convention Center and riverfront area.

LA 15 was closed approximately eight miles south of Vidalia near St. Genevieve beginning at 9AM today due to work on the levee. An approximate one-mile segment of LA 15 will be closed where LA 15 runs on the crown of the levee in this area. The detour route will consist of US 84 (Ferriday to Stacy), LA 129 (Stacy to Monterey), and LA 565 (Monterey to Deer Park). The closure begins today and will remain in effect until the Mississippi River recedes to the point that the levee reinforcement work is no longer necessary.

The LWC office in Ferriday was contacted by Riverpark Medical Center, Comfort Suites and Promise Medical Center - three businesses in Vidalia on the banks of the Mississippi that expect to experience flooding. They are temporarily shutting down operations as of today. LWC estimates this will affect approximately 150 employees from all three businesses. The local LWC office is working to guide employees, in the even that claims need to be filed for lost wages.

## **EAST CARROLL PARISH**

The Governor said he will also visit East Carroll Parish today where DOTD has hauled approximately 8,000 cubic yards of sand in support of levee fortification efforts. DOTD has 30 trucks actively hauling sand from Perryville (near Bastrop) to be distributed throughout East Carroll Parish. DOTD forces are scheduled to haul 10,000 cubic yards total by the first of next week. An additional 10 trucks are available as needed to assist in hauling efforts.

## **ANGOLA**

Governor Jindal said that the Louisiana State Penitentiary continues with flooding preparations along the levee, including sandbagging operations and levee patrols, with technical assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition to engineer equipment that LANG delivered on Tuesday, LANG deployed 11 trucks to Angola Wednesday to complete delivery of 1500 cots and 125 tents. On Tuesday evening, Department of Corrections requested a Rough Terrain Fork Lift in order to move the tents to the construction site. LANG deployed the Fork Lift yesterday also. LANG currently has the following equipment deployed at Angola:

- Dump Trucks
- 1 each 2.5yd Front End Loader
- 1 each 10K Rough Terrain Fork Lift
- 125 Tents
- 1,500 Cots (DCFS)

## **ST. FRANCISVILLE – OPENING AUDUBON BRIDGE**

Due to the rising Mississippi River causing the pending closure of the New Roads/St. Francisville ferry, DOTD opened the John James Audubon Bridge at 10 am today. This emergency opening will accommodate traffic that lost river-crossing access when the ferry closed. Now that the bridge is opened, the St. Francisville ferry service is permanently closed.

## **DOC UPDATE**

DOC is working with the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association to assist those sheriffs who have jail facilities that could be affected by Mississippi River flooding with potential evacuation plans.

Secretary Le Blanc held a videoconference with wardens at all state correctional facilities Wednesday to finalize plans for the partial evacuation of Angola to begin on Monday, including solidifying transportation assets and assigning Probation and Parole Officers to provide escorts for buses/vans once evacuations begin.

DOTD sent a survey crew in support of levee assessment to Angola to verify levee elevation marks that will help track the level of rising waters. The survey crew will now go to Hunt Correctional to provide the same verification of levee elevation.

## **DHH UPDATE**

Wednesday, DHH used EMSTAT to request key information from Louisiana's hospitals and nursing homes, including census, generator status and points of contact. This information will be used to establish a baseline.

## **LDWF**

LDWF's Enforcement Division has cancelled all leave for agents and will not approve any new leave for agents through the duration of this possible flooding event. This will make them fully able to assist law enforcement in search and rescue or other response operations as needed.

## **GOHSEP**

14 parishes have now declared a state of emergency to prepare for flooding, including:

- Avoyelles
- Catahoula
- Concordia
- E. Carroll
- LaSalle
- Madison
- Pointe Coupee
- St. Mary
- Tensas
- Terrebonne
- St. Martin
- W. Baton Rouge
- St. James
- W. Feliciana

#### **AG UPDATE**

The Louisiana Dept. of Agriculture is evacuating approximately 200-300 cows in Tensas Parish. The Department continues to help farmers evacuate their livestock as needed.

#### **DNR UPDATE**

The DNR Fuel Team met and is prepared to assist in prepositioning and supplying fuel as may be needed to assist in any evacuations.

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